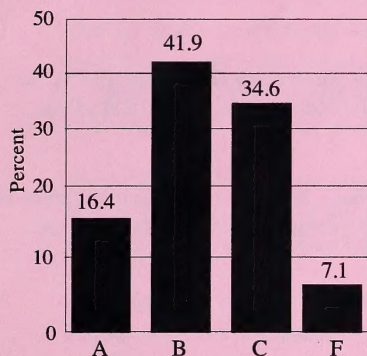


English 30

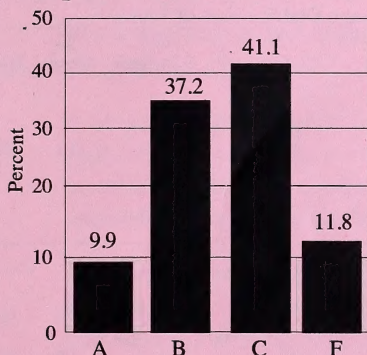
Diploma Examination Results

Examiners' Report for January 1994

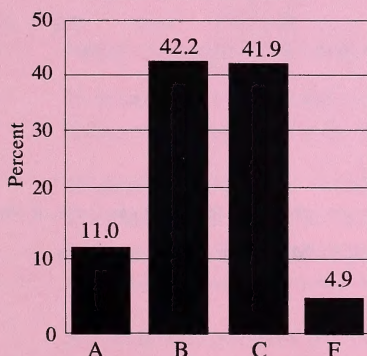
School-Awarded Mark



Diploma Examination Mark



Final Course Mark



The summary information in this report provides teachers, school administrators, students, and the general public with an overview of results from the January 1994 administration of the English 30 Diploma Examination. This information is most helpful when used in conjunction with the detailed school and jurisdiction reports that have been mailed to schools and school and jurisdiction offices. An annual provincial report containing a detailed analysis of the combined January, June, and August results is published each year.

Description of the Examination

The English 30 Diploma Examination consists of two parts: a written-response section and a reading section. Each part is worth 50% of the total examination mark.

Achievement of Standards

The information reported is based on the final course marks achieved by 10 613 students who wrote the January 1994 examination.

- 95.1% of these students achieved the acceptable standard (a final course mark of 50% or higher).
- 11.0% of these students achieved the standard of excellence (a final course mark of 80% or higher).

The competence of students achieving the standard of excellence in writing was impressive. However, the skills students at the acceptable standard demonstrated tended to be uneven; students showed ability on occasion to use language well, but this was not always sustained.

Provincial Averages

- The average school-awarded mark was 66.5%.
- The average diploma examination mark was 63.6%.
- The average final course mark, representing an equal weighting of the school-awarded mark and the diploma examination mark, was 65.6%.

Part A: Written Response

Part A: Written Response is written at a different time from *Part B: Reading*. Students are required to complete two writing assignments related to the same piece of literature. Both assignments assess a variety of reading, writing, and thinking skills.

Readers will find the results most meaningful in the context of the assignments and the scoring descriptors. The most useful starting place for reviewing these results is at the **(3) Satisfactory** level. Such work exceeds the pass mark of 50%. The scoring criteria are in the *1993–94 School Year English 30 Information Bulletin, Diploma Examination Program*, which is available in all schools.

The table below outlines the requirements for each assignment, the categories for scoring each assignment, the amount each category contributes to the total mark (parts A and B combined), and the percentage of students achieving at the various levels.

By comparing school and jurisdiction results to provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

Examination Blueprint and Percentage Distribution of Scores

Description of the Writing Assignment	Scoring Category	Proportion of Total Mark (%)	Percentage Distribution of Scores					
			(5) Excellent	(4) Proficient	(3) Satisfactory	(2) Limited	(1) Poor	Ins*
Minor Assignment The student is required to respond personally and thoughtfully to literature and to communicate clearly and effectively in writing.	Total Impression	12.5	2.1	18.3	54.3	22.5	2.1	0.8
Major Assignment The major assignment maintains a thematic connection to the minor assignment. The student is required to demonstrate an appreciation of literary works studied in class by discussing theme and the literary techniques that the author uses to support that theme. The student is also required to synthesize thoughts clearly and correctly in writing.	Thought and Detail	15.0	2.8	17.5	46.0	30.9	2.6	0.3
	Organization	7.5	2.6	17.7	57.8	20.7	1.0	0.3
	Matters of Choice	7.5	3.3	20.8	59.5	14.7	1.4	0.3
	Matters of Correctness	7.5	3.5	24.0	53.2	16.8	2.2	0.3

*Ins (Insufficient) is a special category that includes students who did not attempt the assignment, who wrote too little to evaluate, or who wrote answers that were completely off topic.

Note: The shaded portion represents the percentage of students who achieved or exceeded a **(3) Satisfactory** level of performance.

Minor Assignment: Reader's Interpretation of Literature

The January 1994 Minor Assignment: Reader's Interpretation of Literature is a newly revised assignment, both in terms of the requirements of the assignment itself and in the Scoring Criteria used by markers in evaluation. Students are addressed as *readers* who will provide their own interpretation of the effectiveness of detail in the given selection in the context of the thematic topic.

The literature selection was an excerpt from the novel *Wild Geese*, by Martha Ostenso. In this excerpt, a newcomer to the rural Manitoba area meets one of the local landowners and hears from him a chilling account of the deaths of his two brothers. Students were required to select from the passage details that, from their perspective as readers, were effective in conveying a sense of isolation to them.

Students' responses were evaluated on the basis of the thoughtfulness of selection and discussion of details, and the clarity of written expression. Students generally had no difficulty selecting details that evoked a sense of isolation for them as readers.

Students achieving scores of (4) Proficient and (5) Excellent were perceptive and focused in their personal interpretation of the reading passage. They were able to "explain" (as required by the assignment) either explicitly or implicitly their choice of details from the passage. Personal anecdotes, if used, often showed a thematic parallel to the excerpt. Writing at this level was fluent and controlled.

Those achieving a (3) Satisfactory selected appropriate details which they supported clearly by referring to the passage.

A very small percentage of students failed to make any discernible reference to the reading selection and received an Insufficient. Students' careful reading of the assignment and of the Guidelines for Writing is essential. Students need to be reminded that markers are looking for evidence that each student is responding to the reading selection within the context of the topic.

Responses to the assignment were varied. Most students chose details and discussed or explained their effectiveness in conveying the effect of isolation to the student. Some students related a detail or a quotation to a personal experience of isolation. Others elaborated on the personal significance of one detail from the excerpt; for example, the action of Caleb Gare. Still others wrote reflectively about isolation, referring to details in the excerpt to reinforce their ideas.

Major Assignment: Literature Composition

In responding to the assignment, students referred to a wide variety of literature. Most students attempted to develop an idea rather than simply describing isolation.

Students who achieved overall scores of (4) Proficient and (5) Excellent tended to recognize that isolation is an inevitable part of the human condition, requiring and producing strength and understanding. Students writing at this level presented a controlling idea and selected details from literature in a purposeful way, maintaining the relationship between the author's purpose and their own controlling idea.

Students who achieved overall scores of (3) Satisfactory, tended to suggest that isolation, whether chosen deliberately or imposed, affects human beings in a negative way. Many writers at this level offered advice for avoiding such a painful condition. Most students selected a work(s) which presented an example of an isolated character(s) and then described that (those) character(s), relating plot details to support their description. Sometimes students became entangled in detail and lost sight of their controlling idea.

Question-by-Question Results

Question	Key	Difficulty*
1	B	62.8
2	D	59.2
3	B	51.0
4	A	72.0
5	C	37.7
6	C	83.8
7	B	69.3
8	D	79.9
9	D	81.7
10	A	83.7
11	D	83.3
12	A	76.5
13	D	77.4
14	C	75.5
15	B	83.4
16	D	61.2
17	B	32.5
18	D	64.9
19	D	45.6
20	B	57.2
21	B	54.2
22	D	71.5
23	C	43.0
24	C	75.2
25	B	67.0
26	D	81.5
27	B	59.8
28	A	52.0
29	B	77.3
30	A	90.6
31	A	84.2
32	D	43.1
33	C	72.3
34	A	82.4
35	D	45.7
36	C	64.1
37	B	68.1
38	A	51.9
39	B	70.6
40	A	54.0
41	B	87.2
42	C	62.7
43	C	78.3
44	B	70.2
45	—	—
46	C	76.5
47	B	84.8
48	C	72.0
49	C	54.1
50	A	63.9
51	D	70.6
52	D	87.5
53	D	64.1
54	B	72.1
55	D	36.5
56	C	83.4
57	A	60.3
58	B	77.6
59	A	66.9
60	C	67.7
61	C	76.9
62	A	52.7
63	A	71.9
64	D	60.1
65	D	60.2
66	C	78.7
67	A	66.6
68	C	72.2
69	A	56.2
70	A	63.6

*Difficulty —percentage of students answering the question correctly

Part B: Reading

The table at the left shows question-by-question results and the keyed answers. Parallel tables in the school and jurisdiction reports show the percentage of students who selected each alternative. By comparing school and jurisdiction results to provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

Examination Blueprint

Part B: Reading has a value of 70 marks,* one for each multiple-choice question. Each question is classified in two ways: according to the curricular content area being tested and according to the thinking (process) skill demanded by the question. The examination blueprint illustrates the distribution of questions in January 1994 according to these classifications.

Classification by Course Content	Classification by Thinking Skills			Total
	Literal Understanding	Inference and Application	Evaluation	
Meanings	30, 32, 33, 34, 50, 56	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, 18, 25, 27, 29, 38, 43, 46, 48, 58, 65, 66, 69	1, 14, 26	30 Items (21%)
Critical Response		10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 23, 28, 31, 47, 51, 57, 68	2, 19, 20, 44, 54, 55, 67,	19 Items (14%)
Human Experience and Values	45*	22, 24, 35, 36, 40, 49, 52, 53, 59, 60, 61, 62, 64, 70	21, 37, 39, 41, 42, 63	21 Items (15%)
Total	7 Items (5%)	47 Items (34%)	16 Items (11%)	70 Items (50%)

* Question 45 was dropped from the examination before mark calculations were made. The total mark possible, therefore, was 69.

Subtest Results**

Results are in average raw scores.

Total Part B: 46.4 out of 69

Course Content

- Meanings: 18.3 out of 30
- Critical Response: 12.8 out of 19
- Human Experience and Values: 13.2 out of 20

** Readers are cautioned **not** to compare subtest results because the subtests are not of equal difficulty. Instead, readers should compare these provincial subtest results with their own school subtest results.

Examiners' Comments

Standards

During the marking session, a committee of five classroom teachers of English 30 reviewed Part B: Reading to determine whether the standards embedded in the readings and questions were appropriate and fair. Committee members commented that the selection for readings was challenging, particularly in terms of length, but balanced in term of reading difficulty and general subject matter appeal.

Deleted Question

Question 45 was dropped from Part B. Question analysis and committee comments indicated that alternatives C and D were equally attractive to students.

Detailed Discussion

The following tables give results for five multiple-choice questions. For each question, statistics are provided for three student groups. The five questions are based on the excerpt from *The Winter's Tale*, by William Shakespeare. A review of student responses to this passage may offer a meaningful glimpse of English 30 students' reading performance.

Percentage of Students Correctly Answering Selected Multiple-Choice Questions

Student Group	Question Number				
	27	28	32	35	36
All Students	59.8	52.0	43.1	45.7	64.1
Students achieving the <i>standard of excellence</i> (80% or higher, or A) on the whole examination	81.9	86.4	69.1	72.6	93.2
Students achieving the <i>acceptable standard</i> who received between 50% and 64%, or C, on the whole examination	52.7	39.3	36.0	36.9	52.9

The Winter's Tale is a particularly challenging text that relies on students having access to complex syntactical structure, and also to unfamiliar and archaic vocabulary. Teacher reviewers commented that this passage was very challenging and would discriminate between highly skilled and less skilled readers.

The results are surprisingly good given the challenge. The 11 questions based on this passage ranged in difficulty (percentage of students selecting the correct answer) from 43.1% to 90.6%.

27. When Leontes declares that he is blessed (line 5) and then adds "How accurs'd / Is being so blest!" (lines 7–8), he means that he feels cursed by the

- A. threat to Hermione's health
- B. confirmation of his suspicions
- C. responsibilities of his noble birth
- D. uncertainty of Polixenes' departure

28. Leontes' description of the spider in the cup in lines 8–11 implies that

- A. ignorance presents no threat
- B. foreign ingredients are infectious
- C. villains are always trying to do harm
- D. poisonous objects are in everyday places

32. In lines 57 to 63, Leontes claims to base his restraint on his

- A. reluctance to demonstrate unkindness toward Hermione
- B. refusal to acknowledge the differences between royalty and commoners
- C. inability to find words forceful enough to describe the degree of his displeasure
- D. refusal to set an example with words that would equal the example of Hermione's behavior

Question 27. This question made high demands of students. They had to consider the information presented in the lengthy preamble. They had to be sensitive to the fact that Leontes speaks ironically and in pun when he speaks of being "blest." They had to recognize the meaning of "just censure," which is difficult. Yet, 59.8% of all students successfully answered this question. These students apparently recognized and responded to the requirement to read carefully. Of those students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination (parts A and B), 81.9% correctly answered this question. Of those students who achieved the acceptable standard on the whole examination (parts A and B), 52.7% answered the question correctly.

Question 28. Teacher reviewers predicted that this question would prove to be the most difficult of the eleven questions based on this passage. However, 52% of the students answered correctly. Questions 32 and 35 proved more difficult.

In the speech cited, Leontes explains his regret that his suspicions of treachery have been confirmed. Leontes constructs an analogy to illustrate that "what you don't know won't hurt you."

Students who answered this question correctly had to infer the connection between "knowledge that is not infected" and non-threatening "ignorance" (alternative A). Of those students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination (parts A and B), 86.4% correctly answered this question. Of those who achieved the acceptable standard on the whole examination (parts A and B), 39.3% answered correctly, suggesting that they were responding at a literal level.

Question 32. This question proved to be one of the most difficult on the Part B: Reading examination. And, indeed, to determine the "reason for Leontes' restraint," students had to infer a meaning from a very difficult speech. Those who managed to do so, 43.1% of all students, likely made a connection between "precedent" in line 60 and "example" in the correct alternative D. Of those students answering correctly, 69.1% achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination (parts A and B). Only 36.0% of the students who achieved the acceptable standard on the whole examination chose the correct answer. More of this group chose alternative C, perhaps responding to line 59, "Which I'll not call a creature of thy place" and not considering the whole speech in context.

35. In lines 87 to 89, Hermione acknowledges that
- A. she is too vain to weep
 - B. women believe that weeping will erase guilt
 - C. women do not realize that weeping will elicit sympathy
 - D. her not weeping may result in her receiving less sympathy
-

36. Hermione's instructions to her attendants (lines 98–102) reveal her attitude of
- A. anger
 - B. shame
 - C. resolve
 - D. timidity
-

Question 35. This question also proved to be very difficult: only 45.7% of all students answered correctly. Students had to interpret a complex syntactical structure “the want of which vain dew / Perchance shall dry your pities” and realize that Hermione is referring to her weeping. Of those students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination (parts A and B), 72.6% correctly answered this question. Of those who achieved the acceptable standard on the whole examination (parts A and B), 36.9% answered correctly. Students who failed the whole examination were attracted almost equally to alternatives A, B, and D. This suggests that they were guessing.

Question 36. To answer this question, students had to assimilate aspects of Hermione’s character as presented throughout the excerpt. Although anger and shame are logical responses to Leontes’ accusations, it is her confidence in her own innocence that lends Hermione such dignity and strength. She is certain that she shall see Leontes sorry.

Of those students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination (parts A and B), 93.2% chose the correct answer. Of those who achieved the acceptable standard on the whole examination (parts A and B), 52.9% answered correctly. Students who failed the whole examination were attracted to alternatives A and B. Perhaps unsuccessful students were unsure of the meaning of “resolve.”

Although the previous five questions did prove to be quite difficult, most students managed the set of questions very well, especially considering that all except question 30 required rereading of the text.

In their responses to the 11 questions (27 to 37) based on *The Winter’s Tale*, students demonstrated that they have acquired the skills to infer information from highly complex context. Students who have these high-level reading skills will have little difficulty making critical judgements about other media such as newspapers, radio, and television.

For further information, contact Gail Gates, Mary Lou Campbell, or Elana Scraba at the Student Evaluation Branch, 427-0010.

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